



MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

The purpose of this document is simply to be transparent about what is involved in membership. Thank you for taking the time to think through this commitment!

Throughout the Bible, our God shows himself to be a God who loves to make promises and then keep them. In fact, as Christians, the foundation of our whole faith is believing God's promises to us, and resting on them for both our life now and our salvation. He says, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" (Lev. 26:12; Rev. 21:3). And he has proven to be true to his promises by sealing them all to us in the blood of His Son, who was crucified on our behalf.

Therefore, as Christians being formed into the image of his Son Jesus, we will begin to be a promise-making people like him. The biblical word for promise making is *covenanting*. To make a covenant in the Bible is more than to make impersonal promises like in a legal contract, but to make relational promises of love, like in a marriage or family, both to God and to each other. Therefore, one of the most natural aspects of the Christian life is to covenant with our church family.

Church membership is the way we covenant to one another. And the Bible says that through Christ we have been made into a body. We are not members of a club, we are members of a body. Each member of the body has a function, and a healthy body requires that the members are unified and each does its part well.

*"...Walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to **maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call – one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But **grace was given to each one of us** according to the measure of Christ's gift...Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, **when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**" – Eph. 4:1-7, 15-16*

Church membership is how we pursue this "unity of the Spirit" through promising to play our part according to the "grace [that] was given to each one of us." This Membership Covenant focuses on our commitment to "one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism." The following statements constitute the promises we make in joy to God and to one another.

One Lord – Statement of Personal Faith in Christ

1. I acknowledge myself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy.
2. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel.
3. I resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that I will endeavor to live as a follower of Jesus, in constant need of His grace.
4. I have been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit as a public profession of my faith in Christ or as a covenant child.

One Faith – Statement of Doctrinal Unity

1. I agree that the sixty-six books of the Bible are the ultimate doctrinal authority on all matters, and therefore the final arbiter on all church issues (Is. 55:11; 1 Cor. 15:3-4; 2 Tim. 3:15-16; Heb. 4:12).
2. I understand that biblical doctrines fall under three categories:
 - a. Core Beliefs – Doctrines To Die Over
 - b. Biblical Commitments – Doctrines To Divide Over
 - c. Personal Convictions – Doctrines To Discuss Over
3. I embrace as Core Beliefs the historic, orthodox, Christian faith articulated in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds.
4. I agree to not be divisive about the Biblical Commitments of Christ Church Bellingham (e.g. doctrines of grace, infant baptism, male eldership, etc.). These are summarized in What We Believe, Christ Church 101, and articulated in fuller detail in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the PCA Book of Church Order. **This is what we believe the Bible teaches, but you are not required to affirm every point of doctrine to be a member.**
5. I also agree to not be divisive over Personal Convictions (e.g. Eschatology, Creation Days, etc.).

One Baptism – Statement of Christ Church Bellingham's Promises to You

1. We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the criteria assigned to them in Scripture (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9) so that they might offer an example to the church of a Christ-centered life (1 Tim. 4:12; 1 Peter 5:1-3).
2. We covenant to teach you the whole counsel of God as revealed in the Bible, especially in that all Scripture points to Jesus Christ and the Gospel (Acts 20:27-28; Luke 24:44-47; 1 Tim. 4:13). Through this we also covenant to guard the church against false teaching (Acts 20:28-31), and to maintain the peace and purity of the church through church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).
3. We covenant to lead the church in accordance with the Scriptures and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit (Acts. 20:28; 1 Cor. 2:9-16), not by lording power over the church like the world (Mark 10:42-45), but as servants in love, gentleness, patience, wisdom, truth, and joy (1 Thess. 2:7-8; Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Tim. 2:22-26).
4. We covenant to equip you for the ministry God has called you to and gifted you for (Eph. 4:11-13; Rom. 12:4-8), and therefore to also pray for your spiritual

growth in Christ (Col. 1:8-12) and for your temporal needs and burdens (James 5:14) that you may be joyfully active in the mission of our church (Luke 6:33).

One Body and One Spirit – Statement of Commitment to the Mission of CCB

The mission of Christ Church Bellingham is to proclaim the excellencies of God in Bellingham and from there throughout the world through worship, disciple-making, deeds of love, and church planting.

1. I acknowledge that the mission statement of Christ Church Bellingham is a faithful summary of the mission Jesus gave to his disciples (1 Peter 2:9; Acts 1:8; John 4:23; Matt. 28:18-20; Titus 2:14; 2 Tim. 2:2), and I therefore commit to participate in this mission through reliance on the Holy Spirit.
2. I will maintain a close relationship with the Lord Jesus through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and practice of spiritual disciplines. My relationship will be evident through my participation in weekly worship services, communion, Christ Church community, service, and a life that glorifies Jesus (Ps. 105:1-2; Ps. 119:97; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25; 2 Peter 1:3).
3. I will steward the resources God has given me, including my time, talents, and treasure (Prov. 3:9-10; Rom. 12:1-2; Gal. 5:22-26; Eph. 4:1-16; 5:15-18). This includes regular financial giving (traditionally 10%), service, and participation in the community that is sacrificial, cheerful, and voluntary (Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 8-9; 12:7-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
4. I will not function in leadership or as a member in another church family (Heb. 13:17).
5. I covenant to submit to discipline by God through his Holy Spirit, to follow biblical procedures for church discipline in my relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, to submit to righteous discipline when approached biblically by brothers and sisters in Christ, and to submit to discipline by church leadership if the need should ever arise (Ps. 141:5; Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-8; Gal. 6:1-5; 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Tim. 2:25; Titus 1:9; 3:10-11; Heb. 12:5-11; Rev. 2:5-7, 14-25).
6. I agree, by God's grace, to walk in holiness as an act of worship to Jesus Christ, who has saved me from my sin that I could live a new life (2 Cor. 5:17); I will practice complete chastity before marriage and complete fidelity in heterosexual marriage by abstaining from practices such as cohabitation, pornography, and fornication (Job 31:1; Prov. 5; Rom. 13:12-14; 1 Cor. 6:9-7:16; Heb. 13:4); I will also refrain from other sinful behavior as the Bible or my conscience dictate (1 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 5:19-21). Should I sin in such a manner, I agree to confess my sins to Christian brothers or sisters and seek help to put my sin to death (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5; 1 John 1:6-10). **Note: sin does not result in loss of membership. This is a commitment to not remain complacent in any such sins.**

I understand that this covenant obligates me to the members of Christ Church Bellingham and is an acknowledgment of my submission to the elders of the church. I accept the responsibility to notify the Christ Church leadership if at any time I can no longer commit to this covenant, or if I have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding Christ Church Bellingham.